

Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

GCSE IT (4IT0) Paper 01

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This was the first sitting of the written paper examination for Edexcel's International GCSE ICT specification.

The total mark for the paper is 100; 16 marks are available for multi-choice responses and 84 for free response questions.

Multi-choice questions

It was pleasing to note that in general candidates performed well on the multi-choice responses. There were only three questions where less than half of the candidates gained the mark; these questions were at the end of this section and targeted the higher ability candidates.

In some instances, candidates failed to answer all questions. It should be noted that marks are not deducted for incorrect answers and candidates should attempt all questions.

Free response questions

Q17(a) The vast majority were able to gain at least 4 marks for this question.

Q17(b) Many candidates gave incorrect answers in (i), 'scanner' being a very popular response, however the majority went on to gain at least 1 mark for (ii).

Q17(c) The vast majority were able to gain at least 2 marks for this question.

Q18(a) & (b) The vast majority gained both marks.

Q18(c) Many candidates gained the mark, however others gave responses relating to security or connecting to the internet.

Q18(d) (i) & (ii) Candidates often confused the answers to the two parts of the question, giving the answer for (ii) in (i). However, many gained a mark for 'wireless' in (i) and were able to describe sharing music / videos between a laptop and mobile phone in (ii).

Q18(e) This question was very well answered by the majority of candidates. The features most commonly described were weight, screen size, battery life and webcam. Generally, candidates went on to gain at least one mark for the explanation.

Those who identified the operating system often failed to gain any additional marks for the explanation, as responses were very vague.

Q19(a) The vast majority gained the mark.

Q19(b) Only a minority gained this mark. ISP address was often given as an incorrect response.

Q19(c) Many candidates gained a mark for giving 'password', however very few showed any real understanding and few mentioned 'network key / WAP / WEP'. 'Firewall' was often given as an incorrect response.

Q19(d) The majority of candidates were able to identify at least one risk, however the solutions were often mixed up e.g. firewalls as a solution for virus and encryption as a solution to viruses.

Q19(e) This question was poorly answered by many candidates. Answers often incorrectly focussed on the lack of security of wireless networks and where candidates correctly identified wired connections as being more stable or faster, there was rarely an attempt to relate this to the effect on playing games.

Q20(a) Surprisingly, fewer than half of candidates were able to identify 'browser', many giving named software such as 'Internet Explorer' and 'Firefox' which could not be accepted.

Q20(b) This question was generally well answered; candidates were able to identify at least two advantages in (i) and one disadvantage in (ii). Marks were lost by repeating answers and giving vague responses.

Q20(c)(i) Candidates were, in general, able to gain one mark in (i), however many incorrectly identified non-computer methods of advertising, or different methods of advertising on their own website. Emailing customers was the most popular correct response.

Q20(c)(ii) The quality of responses varied tremendously, although overall the question was not well answered. Many answers related to marketing techniques such as discount schemes and free delivery, which are not features of the web page. Other candidates identified sensible features, but were not able to give clear explanations of advantages to the company or customer and, as in Q20(b), many candidates repeated answers.

Q20(c)(iii) Many candidates correctly identified that the question was related to the Data Protection Act, but few were able to give clear answers in terms of the principles. A large proportion of candidates gave incorrect responses relating to the company's ordering system and using the data collected as evidence of order or for promotions and not having to re-enter it.

Q21(a) The quality of responses varied tremendously in this question. Where candidates had learnt about networking they gained high marks; however it was clear that many others had little understanding and failed to gain any marks. Responses were often mixed up with the correct responses to the intranet question in 21(c) and others gave internet based responses.

Q21(b) Only a small minority were able to correctly identify 'access right', and whilst 'password protection of files / folders' would have gained the mark, many merely gave 'passwords' and gained no marks.

Q21(c) As in Q21(a), the quality of responses varied tremendously in this question. As pointed out above there was much mixing up of answers and also many internet based responses. In addition candidates were asked to identify how the intranet could be used by teachers or students and many answers omitted any reference to this.

Q21(d) This question was surprisingly poorly answered. In (i) the most frequently correct response related to taking food and drinks into the computer room. Incorrect responses ranged widely. Many gained one mark in (ii), however the focus of the question was on guidelines for students and candidates frequently lost marks by giving responses which were beyond a student's control, e.g. 'install correct lighting'.

Q21(e) As would be expected in this type of level marked question, the quality of response varied widely. The candidates who gained the higher marks had often drawn up brief plans and presented well reasoned, logical responses. Other candidates merely started writing and 'rambled' through their responses, often missing important points. The majority did, however, identify the two sides of the problem, i.e. researching and using the information.

Q22(a) As in previous questions many candidates lost marks by giving vague responses or by not relating the question to the organisation e.g., 'staff being able to work from home', with no further clarification.

Q22(a)(ii) Many candidates were able to cite the increased need for security. Unfortunately, many others gave 'staff losing their jobs' as a negative effect on the organisation.

Q22(b) As with Q21(e) the quality of response varied widely and the candidates who gained the higher marks had often drawn up brief plans and presented well reasoned, logical responses. Many candidates were able to discuss some of the issues e.g. the cost of technology and lack of communication networks, but often failed to state clearly the effects of these or go on to discuss how this creates a widening gap. Others candidates took 'information' literally and discussed the lack of access to TV news channels, internet and newspapers.

Key Areas for improvement:

- Answer all multi choice questions
- Read all of the information given in the question
- Answer questions in context
- Plan answers to level marked questions.

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